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Contacts:

Frankie Acosta, GM, AIA Sports Properties
(602) 385-3828 / facosta@aia365.com
Brian Bolitho, Dir. Of Business Media
(602) 385-3822 / bbolitho@aiaonline.org

David Johnston, Rockbridge Sports Group
(434) 422-0204 djohnston@rockbridgesports.com

Arizona Christian University and AIA Sports Properties Launch Partnership to Engage High School Athletes

New Football Program to Begin in 2014, Building Future Cornerstone of ACU Athletics

PHOENIX, AZ – The Arizona Christian University Firestorm already compete in 15 men’s and women’s collegiate sports in the NAIA, and are preparing to launch the inaugural season of ACU football in fall 2014. To broaden awareness of opportunities to compete as a student-athlete at ACU across all competitive sports, ACU is partnering with Phoenix-based AIA Sports Properties to engage high school student-athletes, families and fans throughout the state of Arizona and the greater Southwest.

“Arizona Christian University is rising to create new opportunities for students in higher education, including an athletics program that balances faith and strength of character with championship-caliber competition,” said Len Munsil, president of Arizona Christian University. “We are proud to partner with AIA Sports Properties to raise the visibility of ACU Athletics, especially with the launch of our football program that adds to our many successful existing men’s and women’s teams.

“We are excited about our ability through this sponsorship with AIA to harness an association with more than 120,000 student-athletes, 14,000 coaches, 4,000 officials and over 1 million fans,” Munsil said. “This initiative represents a new level of intensity in our efforts to recruit the best and brightest for ACU Athletics.”

AIA Sports Properties executes the exclusive sponsorship and multimedia rights partnership between the Arizona Interscholastic Association and Rockbridge Sports Group. Based in Charlottesville, Virginia, Rockbridge Sports Group is led by executives with decades of experience in building and executing fully-integrated property and media rights programs on behalf of some of the premier brands in collegiate sports.

Rockbridge Sports Group is working with AIA to create a platform for Arizona high schools to realize and leverage the value of their athletics programs, focused on building leadership skills that will benefit student-athletes as they prepare to enter collegiate life and the workforce.

“The Arizona Interscholastic Association is committed first and foremost to our student-athletes, and partnering with Rockbridge Sports Group ensures that we will grow this program within our culture,” said Chuck Schmidt, associate executive director and chief operating officer of the Arizona Interscholastic Association. “This team shares our mission and is committed to do everything we can to generate resources and opportunities to support our next generation of local leaders, which will come from responsible and engaged corporate leaders who understand how giving back to their communities can help them meet their goals.”

AIA Sports Properties is led by General Manager Frankie Acosta, former Assistant Athletic Director at the University of Arizona with more than 15 years in program development. “Our deep experience with students, families and educational institutions in Arizona, combined with the expertise and national exposure of Rockbridge Sports Group, provides real value and returns on objectives for our partners,” said Acosta. “This partnership has tremendous potential to launch Arizona Christian University and Firestorm Athletics to the next level of collegiate competition in the years ahead.”

ACU will host an Athletics Preview Day on Saturday, February 8, for high school student-athletes and their families. In addition to a campus tour, sessions will provide an introduction to the ACU Athletics program and the coaching staff, as well as overviews of admissions/financial aid and preparation for collegiate-level play. The Preview Day will be capped off by the ACU Firestorm men’s basketball team hosting The Masters College at 4:00 p.m.

About Arizona Christian University

ACU is a private, non-profit, Christian university in Phoenix offering bachelor’s degrees in Behavioral Health, Biblical Studies, Biology, Business Administration, Christian Ministries, Communication, Elementary Education, Family Studies, Music, Music Education, Political Science and Secondary Education, as well as pre-law and pre-med tracks. With a notable student-to-faculty ratio of 16:1, ACU’s distinguished professors are committed to developing the complete person through the integration of faith, learning, and Christian leadership. ACU competes in the National Christian College Athletic Association Division I, and is a member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and the Golden State Athletic Conference. Athletic opportunities include baseball (m), basketball (m, w), cross country (m, w), football (m), golf (m, w), soccer (m, w), softball (w), tennis (m, w) and volleyball (w). Students have multiple opportunities for campus involvement including mission trips, Urban Outreach, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, chorale, worship bands, and study abroad options. www.acufirestorm.com

About Arizona Interscholastic Association

The AIA is a voluntary association of public and private high schools established by its members for which it is responsible to. The democratic governance of the AIA provides representation and input opportunities to all its member schools through their governing board members, administrators and teachers who serve on the Legislative Council, Executive Board and ad hoc committees. There are over 270 member high schools totaling more than 305,000 students under the AIA. The AIA was established in 1913. The AIA is online at www.aiaonline.org and www.aia365.com.

About Rockbridge Sports Group

Rockbridge Sports, Media and Entertainment LLC (dba Rockbridge Sports Group) is pioneering a new model in collegiate, high school, and global event multi-media rights management, empowering clients to retain ownership and control of their brand while maximizing asset value and revenue in fast-changing digital and traditional environments. To learn more about Rockbridge Sports Group, visit www.rockbridgesports.com.

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